Hampshire Home Choice

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Hampshire Home Choice Scheme User Guide

Your key to a new home in East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester

Welcome to Hampshire Home Choice

About Hampshire Home Choice

Hampshire Home Choice is a new way of looking for social housing within East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester. Rather than us deciding which property to offer you, you can now choose which advertised properties interest you.

Hampshire Home Choice is available to:

- Applicants currently on the Councils' Housing List
- New applicants
- Existing tenants who would like to transfer to a new home
- Households who have been accepted by the Council as homeless.

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Need more help?

If you need more help and support to participate in the scheme you can contact us:

☎ by phone at **01962 840 222** or by email at **housing@winchester.gov.uk**

Please have the following information to hand when contacting us or when making a bid:

- **Your Name:**
- **Your Unique reference number (Housing application number):**
- **Your Memorable Date (Password):**

A quick user guide on applying to Hampshire Home Choice - *Four steps to a new home*

1 Registration

To register you need to complete the Hampshire Home Choice application form. You can do this online on **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk**, download from **www.winchester.gov.uk** website or obtain it from our Customer Service Centre at Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ or by telephoning **01962 840 222.**

After your form has been assessed, we will contact you with details of your Priority Band, your bedroom entitlement and instructions on how to bid for properties. Should we require any information you have not provided we will request it in writing.

2 Choosing and Bidding

All available properties are advertised weekly on the internet at **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk** and on the property line **0300 300 0028**. They are also listed in a weekly newsletter, which is available online or from the Councils Housing Service.

If you are interested in any properties that meet your housing requirements, you can bid for them online, via our automated 24 hour bidding line, or in person at the Council Offices. You can also have a friend, relative or support worker bid on your behalf using the above methods.

Please remember to use your unique reference number and password when bidding. The bidding cycle runs from Wed 0.01am to Sunday 23.59pm and you can bid for up to 3 properties in any one cycle.

3 Offers

If you have the highest degree of housing need and you are eligible for the property, you will be contacted by the landlord. The landlord will advise you what you need to do to sign up for the tenancy.

4 Feedback

The Hampshire Home Choice website and Newsletter will publish information about successfully let homes including the number of applicants who bid, the band and the priority date of the successful applicant (personal details will not be published).

A new list of properties will be available weekly and the bidding process starts again on Wednesday 00.01am until Sunday 23.59pm.

Hampshire Home Choice

Information on Hampshire Home Choice online, by phone or in person.

Online:

www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk

Phone:

For bidding, please phone the automated bidding line on **0845 260 2303**. For listening to adverts, please phone the property line on **0300 300 0028.**

In person:

You can come into the East Hampshire District Council, Havant Borough Council or Winchester City Council Offices, local offices or Housing Association offices.

How does Hampshire Home Choice work?

1 Registration

How to register

To apply to join the Hampshire Home Choice Housing Register you must be over 16 years of age. If you are 16 or 17 years of age, you may not be actively considered for an offer of an introductory or assured tenancy until you reach the age of 18.

To register, you will need to complete an application form. You can complete the form online at **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk** or download it from the Winchester City Council website **www.winchester.gov.uk.** You can also obtain it from the City Council Offices. You will be asked to provide relevant documentation as detailed on the form.

If you do not fill in the application form correctly or fail to provide all relevant documentation we will be unable to process your application. Your application will be registered from the date the fully completed form is received.

Keeping applications up to date

You must tell us if there are any changes in your circumstances so that we can reassess your application. **Failure to keep us informed may result in you not being eligible for your chosen properties.** You can advise the Council of any changes via a message on your housing register account on the Internet.

What happens if I have a medical problem?

You will need to complete the relevant medical form for assessment. To obtain a medical form please contact the Council.

We will write to you to inform you of the outcome of the assessment and if you have been placed in another band.

My home is in poor condition what should I do?

If you have indicated your home suffers with disrepair your details may be given to the Private Sector Housing Team for an assessment.

What happens once I have registered?

When your application to the Hampshire Home Choice Register has been accepted, we will write to you with details of:

- Your unique reference number (housing application number).
- The band in which you have been placed.
- Your priority date.
- Your registration date.
- Your bedroom entitlement.

2 Choosing and Bidding

How are properties advertised?

All available properties are advertised weekly on the Internet at **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk** or ring our property line on **0300 300 0028.** They are also listed in a weekly newsletter. Properties will be advertised on a Wednesday at 00.01am, and are available for bidding until 23.59 pm the following Sunday.

The adverts

The property advert will give information about the vacant property, including details of the landlord, location, number of bedrooms, rent and other features of the property, to help you decide which property is right for you. The advert will also tell you if there are any special requirements that you must meet, such as a minimum age and which band will be given priority. Please see page 9 for a list of terms and symbols used in the adverts.

Expressing your interest in a property

Bidding means that you express your interest in a property. No money is required. You can bid for up to three properties each week in one of the following ways:

1 On the website

Please visit **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk** and log in using your unique reference number and the date of birth of the main applicant.

2 By telephone

To bid call our 24hr automated bidding line on **0845 260 2303.** To listen to adverts, call our property line on **0300 300 0028.**

3 In person

Visit our Customer Service Centre at the Winchester City Offices, local offices or housing association offices during office hours where staff will be happy to help.

4 Have someone else bid for you

You can ask someone else to bid for you if you are unable to do so, for example your support worker acting as an advocate, your relatives, or City Council support staff. They will need to know your unique reference number and memorable date (Date of Birth of the main applicant).

5 Automatic bidding

If you are unable to use any of the methods listed above, automatic bidding may be set up on suitable properties that meet your housing need. Please contact us if you believe you are unable to bid for yourself and require automatic bidding.

Once you bid for a property, your position on the shortlist for that property at that time is indicated on the system. Please note that your position may change until the bidding cycle closes at 23.59pm each Sunday. You can withdraw your bids and re-use them on other properties up until the close of bidding.

3 Offers

- All eligible bids received will be placed in priority order by band to produce a list of eligible applicants for each property advertised.
- The Council or the landlord will carry out any outstanding eligibility and document checks.
- If you are at the top of the priority list, you will be contacted by the relevant landlord. You may be invited to view the property, but Winchester City Council encourages properties to be viewed on DVD where available, and only allows visits in exceptional circumstances. Sometimes we may not be able to put your name forward to the relevant landlord even if you may have the highest priority need. This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as rent arrears. Should this be the case you will be notified.
- If you are nominated for a property you will not be short listed for other properties until you have decided to either accept or refuse the offer.
- If you decide to refuse the property it will be offered to the next person on the priority list. You will not normally be penalised for refusing a property, but with some special categories a restriction may apply.
- If you accept the property, you will be contacted by the relevant Landlord who will advise you of the date when you can move in, arrange an appointment to complete the necessary paperwork and collect the keys to the property.

4 Feedback

We publish information about homes that have been successfully let, the number of applicants that bid for the property and the band and priority date of the successful applicants. Personal details of applicants will never be shown. We are unable to give people individual feedback due to the numbers involved.

This information is published in the Recent Lets section of the website and in the online newsletter. It will give you a better idea of how popular a particular property or area is and how long you would expect to wait. You can then decide whether to look for other types of property or areas where you may not have to wait as long.

Which properties can I bid for?

You are only able to bid for properties that you are eligible for. The symbols that appear on the adverts indicate any restrictions about who is able to bid for a property (please see page 12 for a complete list).

Size of property

You will be entitled to apply for social housing according to the size of your household (the table is a guide only):

Household	Size
Single person	0 bedroom (studio)
Single person, a couple or pregnant woman	1 bedroom
Household with one child	2 bedrooms
Household with two children	2 or 3 bedrooms
Household with three or more children	3 or 4 bedrooms

Under occupation – This is a situation where one additional bedroom is allowed over the standard housing requirement as shown above, for example:

- Approved medical need for an extra bedroom.
- In some rural exception housing sites in order to promote community sustainability.

Extra Care sheltered housing (Part 2.5)

These properties offer the highest level of social housing support to older customers. To be eligible for Winchester City Council extra care housing a joint assessment will be made by Hampshire County Council Adult Services and Winchester City Council.

Age restrictions

If the property is only eligible to applicants of a particular age these details will be placed in the adverts.

Other restrictions

- Some landlords may not allow you to keep a pet. This will be indicated by the no-pets symbol on the property advert.
- Properties that have adaptations will be offered to people who are in an assessed need of the specific adaptations.
- Rural Exception sites: Offers of tenancies are usually only made to customers with a strong local connection to the parish (or neighbouring parishes). More details can be found under Section 3.1. of the Allocations Framework.

Local Connection

Hampshire Home Choice places an increased emphasis on local connection, therefore you will need to meet certain local connection criteria to qualify for particular bands.

The local connection criteria will be met by you if you:

- have lived in the area for 6 months out of the past 12 months or
- have lived in the area for 3 out of the last 5 years or
- have permanent employment in the area or
- have close family in the area or
- if the customer, or a member of their household, needs to receive long term or life-long medical and/or welfare treatment in the area.

How are applications prioritised?

Once you apply to Hampshire Home Choice Register for social housing your housing need will be assessed and your application placed in one of five priority bandings, as described below (please remember that Winchester City Council has moved from a points based assessment system to a band-based assessment).

Within each band applications will be placed in order according to:

1. **Multiple needs**: Where a customer appears to have multiple housing needs a decision regarding these needs will be made by the Council in conjunction with the relevant supporting information and the published Scheme of Allocation.
2. **Priority date:** This can be the same as your registration date but should your application be moved into a higher Band, your Priority date will change.
3. **Registration date:** this is the date the application was received.

Band 1

Exceptional Housing Needs

- Customers assessed by the Council as having life-threatening medical conditions that are directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions and have been given a Band 1 medical or welfare assessment.
- Accessible or sheltered housing needed to allow a discharge from hospital subject to suitable assessment.
- Any customer agreed to have an exceptional need to move approved by the Council, for example, Child Protection cases, Public Protection including the National Witness Protection Scheme, Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, or other serious social or welfare problems.

Band 2

High Priority

- Social tenants moving out of a property that is required by the council to meet housing need.
- Customers accepted under Homelessness legislation placed in short stay accommodation, not suitable for long term needs, or ending lease period.
- Housing unsuitable on basis of Housing Health and Safety, demolition, redevelopment or subject to major works.
- Statutorily overcrowding or lacking in two or more bedrooms.
- Agreed "Move on" from some supported housing projects to fill the current agreed quota.
- Medical hardship: Customers who have been given a Band 2 medical or welfare priority, or assessed by an occupational therapist as having an urgent need to move into an accessible property.

Band 3

Medium Priority

- Overcrowding lacking in one bedroom.
- Accepted statutorily homeless households in temporary suitable accommodation.
- Accepted Tied tenants required to leave accommodation.
- Customers leaving Her Majesty's Forces and have completed a minimum 9-year engagement.
- Customers who have been accepted as homeless under Homeless legislation and have accepted a qualifying offer of accommodation in the private sector.
- Customers resident in the Winchester District who are qualifying tenants under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976.
- Winchester City Council tied employees who are retiring and who have an offer of re-housing as part of their employment terms and conditions.
- Existing Council tenants who mutuelly agree with Winchester City council to relinquish their tenancy.
- Customers accepted as left in sole occupation of Council stock, with no statutory right to succeed.
- Customers living in inadequate housing, lacking facilities.
- Customers with an assessed Band 3 medical condition.
- Customers who need to move to a particular locality where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.
- Assured shorthold tenants with high rents.

Band 4

Low Priority

- Adequately housed private and social tenants with a local connection.
- Customers who are serving prison sentences and who have a local connection.
- Customers who have housing need but do not have a local connection.

Band 5

No Priority

- Adequately housed private and social tenants with no local connection.
- Applicants with sufficient financial resources to meet their own housing needs.
- Customers with outstanding tenant debts owed to a housing association or the Council.
- Customers who have been guilty of antisocial behaviour.
- Customers who have no local connection and have no housing need.

More detailed information regarding the bands can be viewed in the Allocation Policy on www.winchester.gov.uk or by contacting your local housing service.

Bidding on the website

The website address to use when placing a bid is: **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk**.

The website allows you to:

- Search for advertised properties that meet your housing needs.
- See full details of each property.
- Find out if you are eligible for a property.
- Place or withdraw a bid.
- View your current position in the queue for a property.

You can only bid for properties where you match the advertised criteria.

There are no costs involved in bidding. 'Bidding'' means that you register your interest in a particular property.

In order to bid you will need:

- Your unique reference number (housing registration number).
- Your memorable date date of birth of the primary applicant for your housing application.
- The property reference number(s) that you wish to bid for.

1 Type **www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk** in to the address bar of your internet browser.

2 Click **Login / My Account** option, then enter your housing register reference number and your memorable date (date of birth). At this stage your login will be confirmed and details of any current bids will be shown.

3 Click the **Property search** option. Select any search criteria that you require (for example you may wish to search for a particular size of property) and click **search**.

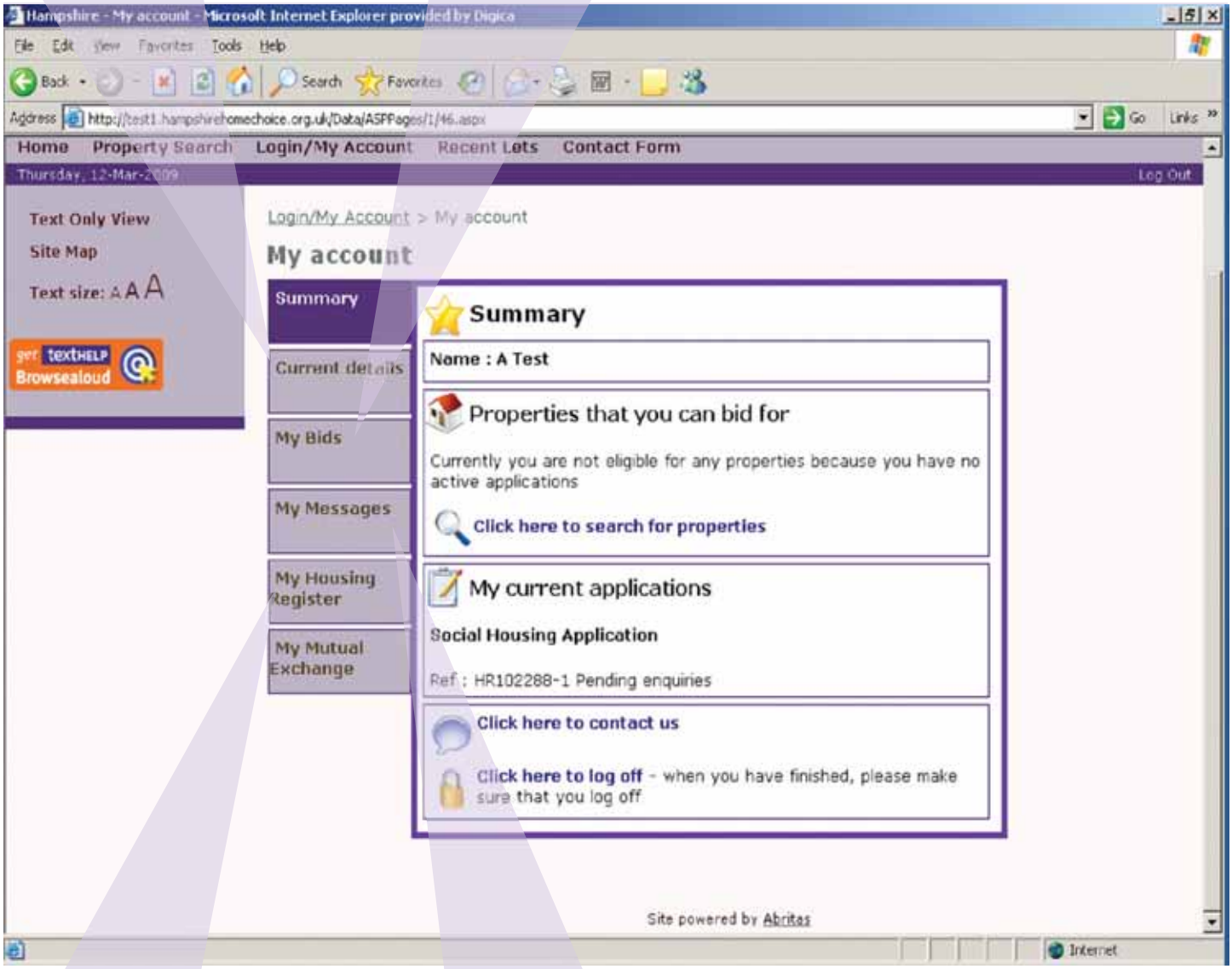
4 A list of properties matching your search criteria will be displayed. If you are eligible for a property then an **Apply Now** button will be displayed. Your current queue position should you bid for this property will also be shown but note that this can change as other people bid. If you are not eligible, then the reason you are not eligible will be displayed.

5 For a property that you are eligible for click the **Apply Now** button. You will be shown the property details and asked to **confirm** your bid. When you confirm your bid you will be told that your bid has been successfully placed.

Guide to your online Account

Current Details
Your details including your current address, allows you to change your memorable date (password).

My Bids
Displays the bids you have placed on advertised properties, including list position.


Hampshire - My account - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Dogica
Home
Property Search
Login/My Account
Recent Lets
Contact Form
Log Out
Text Only View
Site Map
Text size: A A A
Login/My Account > My account
My account
Summary
Current details
My Bids
My Messages
My Housing Register
My Mutual Exchange
Summary
Name : A Test
Properties that you can bid for
Currently you are not eligible for any properties because you have no active applications
Click here to search for properties
My current applications
Social Housing Application
Ref : HR102288-1 Pending enquiries
Click here to contact us
Click here to log off - when you have finished, please make sure that you log off
Site powered by Abritas

My Housing Register –
allows you to search for properties and displays your Application Status.

My Messages
Should you wish to contact us regarding your housing application then messages can be sent and received here.

Mutual Exchange – Not currently in use.

Bidding on the phone

The number to call to place a bid is 0845 260 2303.

Calls will be charged at the local rate but please note that this rate will vary depending on your telephone service provider. Through the telephone system you can place a bid, withdraw a bid, find out if you are eligible and what your current queue position is. You can only bid for properties where you match what the advert asks for. For example, if the property advert states 'Suitable for a couple and two children only' – regardless of your banding/priority – only couples with two children can bid for that property.

In order to bid you will need:

- Your unique reference number (housing registration number)
- The date of birth of the primary applicant for your housing application(or memorable date)
- The property reference number(s) that you wish to bid for

Bidding by phone is done by using the number keypad and the hash key (#) on your telephone. Please note that in order to listen to adverts you need to dial our property line on **0300 300 0028**.

1 Dial the automated bidding telephone number on **0845 260 2303.**

2 You will hear

"Welcome to Hampshire Home Choice. Please select your language from the following list. Press 1 for English, press 2 for etc..."

"You have selected English.
Press 1 to confirm,
Press 2 to reselect your language."

"Please enter your housing register reference, followed by the hash key (#)." "You have entered the following housing register reference" (the reference you entered will be read back to you).

"Press 1 to confirm your housing register reference, or
press 2 to re-enter."

"Your housing register reference has been accepted."

"Please enter the day of the month you were born, followed by the #."

"Please enter the number of the month you were born, followed by the #."

"Please enter the year of your birth using all four numbers, followed by the #."

3 What you will hear after you have your details

"Thank you; your details match our records."

"Press 1 to make an application (make a bid),

Press 2 to review your applications or

Press 3 to exit."

4 Making a bid

"Please enter the property reference number of the property you wish to make an application on (make a bid for), followed by the #."

"You have entered the following property reference number" (the property reference number that you entered will be read back to you. If you are not eligible you will be told why. If you are eligible you will be told your current queue position. (Note that your queue position will change as other people bid)
"Press 1 to confirm."
"Your bid has been accepted."
"Press 2 to change the property reference number."

5 Review/cancel your bids

"You have bid on these properties"

(If you have already bid for properties you will be read a list of the properties with a number).

"Press the number of the property that you wish to cancel the bid for followed by the #."

The property reference number and current queue position will be read out to you. You will be told:
"Subsequent bids may affect your queue position, and some properties may be offered to the most suitable candidate."

"Press 1 if you are sure you want to cancel your bid, otherwise press 2 to exit."

6 Exit

"Thank you for using the system, goodbye."

What do the symbols mean?

Below is a list of the property types available, icons that can appear on the property adverts, and what they mean.

Types of property available

- Social Rented
- Shared Ownership
- Mutual Exchange
- Private Rented

Property details

Bedrooms

The number of bedrooms in this property

Adapted

The property is suitable for people with a mobility need.

Sheltered Housing

This is a sheltered property.

Supported Housing

This is a supported housing scheme.

Minimum Age

At least one household member must be the age shown.

Access to Garden

This property has access to a garden.

Off Street Parking

This property has off road parking.

Pets allowed

Pets **will be** allowed in these properties

Pets not allowed

Pets **will not be** allowed in these properties

Contacting Winchester City Council

Information about contacting Winchester City Council by phone, post, online or in person.

Post:

Winchester City Council Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 9LJ.

Phone:

You can call us on **01962 840 222** between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30 to 4.30 Fridays. Calls are directed through the Council's Customer Service Centre.

Via Email:

customerservices@winchester.gov.uk

Fax:

01962 841 365

Text Telephone:

01962 878982
(For customers who are hard of hearing or speech impaired).

SMS text:

07797 877 004.

Language Support:

If you need a translation service please let us know and we will arrange for an interpreter for you. Council information is available in most common languages, including Russian, Polish, Nepali, Chinese, Bengali, Urdu, Portuguese, Punjabi, Turkish and Arabic.

If you have any other particular needs, for example Braille, audio tape, large print, Easy Read or sign language, please contact the Customer Service Centre on the details above.

Local Access Points – where can I find a computer?

Winchester Offices

Winchester City Offices
Colebrook Street, Winchester,
Hampshire, SO23 9LJ

Local Offices in Alresford
located in Alresford Library
20 Broad street, Alresford, Winchester,
Hants SO24 9 AQ

Local Office in Bishops Waltham
located in the Citizens Advice Bureau
Well House, 2 Brook Street, Bishops Waltham, Hants,
SO32 1AX

Libraries

Winchester Discovery Centre
Jewry Street, Winchester, Hants SO23 8RX
Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-7pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm

Stanmore Library
Wavell Way, Stanmore, Winchester,
Hants SO22 4EH
Opening Hours: Mon and Thurs 2pm-5pm,
Wed and Fri 5.30pm-7pm
Tues, Sat and Sun closed

Alresford Library
20 Broad street, Alresford, Winchester,
Hants SO24 9AQ
Opening Hours: Mon, Thurs and
Sat 9.30am-1pm, Tues 2pm-5pm
Fri 9.30am-1pm and 2pm-7pm, Wed closed

Bishops Waltham Library
Bank Street, Bishops Waltham, Southampton, Hants
SO32 1AN
Opening Hours: Tues 2pm-7pm, Wed and
Fri 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm
Sat 10am-1pm (Sun and Thurs closed)

If you have your own laptop there are also several hotspots available across Winchester, such as McDonalds and Starbucks.